



Department of Justice

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HOGSETT ANNOUNCES CHARGES AGAINST RICHMOND- AREA MARIJUANA TRAFFICKERS

Four defendants arrested and alleged to have imported drugs from California

PRESS RELEASE

INDIANAPOLIS – U.S. Attorney Joseph H. Hogsett announced today charges against four individuals who are alleged to have engaged in a conspiracy to import marijuana from California and distribute it in the Wayne County area. Federal search warrants related to this case were executed earlier this week in Richmond, and all defendants have now been brought into custody.

“We will not tolerate organized criminal activity in Hoosier communities,” Hogsett said. “With our federal and local partners, we’re cracking down on drug trafficking and the violent crime that inevitably comes with it.”

According to a federal indictment unsealed late yesterday, Tonita M. Bridgeforth, age 42, and Denita L. Hughes, age 56, were Richmond-area residents who engaged in a scheme to obtain and distribute drugs. They would allegedly obtain these substances from California resident Benny L. Vincent, age 52, who would mail the drugs to the two defendants.

After the marijuana had been sold locally, the two Indiana defendants would mail the proceeds of these drug sales to Vincent and another California resident named Lee P. Alexander, age 48. As a result of these alleged transactions, all four defendants have also been charged with money laundering.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Melanie C. Conour, who is prosecuting the case, all four defendants face up to 40 years in federal prison if they are convicted. This case was the result of collaborative investigative work by the Drug Enforcement Administration, Homeland Security Investigations, the Postal Inspection Service, the Internal Revenue Service’s Criminal Investigation Division, along with the Wayne County Drug Task Force.